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Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 65/278, adopted following the Assembly's consideration at its sixty-fifth session of the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/152-S/2010/526) reviewing the implementation of the recommendations contained in his 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

The report provides an assessment of major developments with regard to peace, security and development in Africa in the period from July 2012 to July 2013. It also examines the implementation by the United Nations system of key priority areas identified in the review report, namely, increasing institutional cooperation with Africa, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management, post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, sustainable economic growth and development, human rights, rule of law and the administration of justice, and support for security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Furthermore, in keeping with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 65/278 to develop policy proposals on emerging challenges, the report addresses how good governance and the rule of law can be instrumental in ensuring better outcomes for electoral processes in Africa, so that democratic processes such as elections become sources of stability and provide an environment conducive to development rather than serve as triggers of conflict.

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I. Introduction

1. In 1998, in response to a request by the Security Council, the Secretary-General undertook a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa and issued a report in which he proposed specific measures aimed at reducing conflict, building durable peace and promoting sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. As a follow-up to that report, in 2009, in its resolution 63/304, the General Assembly requested a report reviewing the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report, focusing on new and emerging challenges and persistent obstacles, as well as innovative solutions, gains and accomplishments in the attainment of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

3. A comprehensive review was undertaken involving extensive consultations with Member States, the African Union, African regional economic communities, civil society organizations and the United Nations system through the interdepartmental/inter-agency task force on African affairs, including the Bretton Woods institutions, coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The review report outlined progress made, persistent challenges and new and emerging challenges facing Africa, and set out recommendations and proposals for a renewed engagement with Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526).

4. The review report highlighted the fact that Africa had made major advances in strengthening the rule of law, improving governance and entrenching democracy. Good governance, the rule of law and economic opportunity are critical elements for the attainment of sustainable development. The 2011 report (A/66/214-S/2011/476) focused on two challenges straddling the areas of good governance and access to economic opportunity, namely, youth unemployment and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

5. The 2012 report (A/67/205-S/2012/715) focused on the larger issue of the management of diversity and inclusion as factors that can help ensure stability and bring about sustainable development.

6. The thematic section of the present report concentrates on good governance, in particular the issue of how elections can become a source of political stability rather than a trigger for conflict.

II. The year in review

7. Since the issuance of my previous report, while the majority of African countries have been experiencing a period of stability, there have been setbacks in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. There has been progress towards the resolution of conflicts in Somalia and Darfur, and relations between the Sudan and South Sudan have improved, although the situation remains fragile. Efforts to implement the road map for ending the crisis in Madagascar are also continuing. Greater efforts are being made by the United Nations to assist the Libyan authorities in completing their transition.

8. In response to the situation in Mali and following joint approaches created through close partnership with the African Union and the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS), the Security Council adopted resolution 2100 (2013), by which it established, on 1 July 2013, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The United Nations, through MINUSMA, will support the Malian authorities and the northern armed groups in the implementation of the transitional road map, which includes the holding of elections, the return of State authority to the north of the country and the facilitation of national dialogue and reconciliation at the national and local levels.

9. In April 2012, the Democratic Republic of the Congo saw a deterioration of the situation in the eastern part of the country following a mutiny and subsequent conflict between the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and Government forces. The conflict also triggered increased activities by other Congolese and foreign armed groups in North and South Kivu. The recurring cycles of violence, which have plagued the Kivus for many years, prompted the development of a new comprehensive approach that would not only deal with the current violence, but also address its root causes through a set of commitments made at the national, regional and international levels.

10. Following in-depth consultations among countries of the region, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the United Nations, an agreement was reached on a comprehensive approach — the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region — to address the instability in the eastern part of the country. Endorsing this approach, the Security Council, in resolution 2098 (2013), authorized the strengthening of the political and military role of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the deployment of an intervention brigade within MONUSCO to address the threats posed by armed groups operating in the eastern part of the country.

11. The Central African Republic experienced a coup and, despite the ceasefire agreement of January 2013, Séléka rebels advanced southwards and captured the capital. The United Nations has continued to support the efforts of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in particular by supporting the deployment of an additional 1,200 regional peacekeepers to strengthen the 750 ECCAS troops stationed in Bangui.

12. In Somalia, 2012 was marked by significant strides towards peace and stability. In August 2012, the National Constituent Assembly of Somalia adopted the Provisional Constitution of Somalia and held parliamentary elections, which led to the inauguration of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. In September 2012, the Parliament elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the new President of Somalia. This effectively marked the end of almost six years of transition and ushered in the Federal Government of Somalia, the first permanent Government in the country since the start of the civil war in 1991.

13. Despite those significant strides, the people of Somalia face a set of complex political, stabilization and security challenges that must be addressed if the gains are to be sustained. In May 2013, the Security Council, by resolution 2102 (2013), established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to support the Government's peace and reconciliation process by, inter alia, supporting peacebuilding, State-building, governance, security sector reform, the rule of law and the constitutional review process in preparation for elections in 2016. The

Federal Government needs time to build capacity, collect and manage revenue and expand its authority. I call on the international community to continue to support Somalia at this critical time.

14. In April 2012, a coup d'état in Guinea-Bissau was staged by elements of the armed forces two weeks before the second round of presidential elections. The coup exacerbated the continuing unrest in the country since 2010. The United Nations will continue to work to support the country in its transition to stability, together with the African Union, the European Union, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

15. Despite those setbacks, there have been a number of positive trends. A total of 18 elections were held in 2012, and 17 are expected to be held in 2013, including in Libya, Madagascar, Mali and Zimbabwe. Six countries, including Ghana and Kenya, have already held successful elections. The Kenyan elections were notably peaceful when compared with the post-electoral violence in 2008.

16. Reflecting these achievements in democratic governance is the fact that the African Peer Review Mechanism, which was set up in 2003, is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Since its establishment, 33 countries have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism. Seventeen of the countries have completed their self-assessment exercise and have been peer reviewed.[1] The Mechanism has opened up a political space for citizen participation in policy debates, fostered national dialogue, increased advocacy for good governance and improved service delivery. In some countries, Mechanism findings warned of impending crises, and when crises erupted, the findings provided a useful framework for reform.

17. As mentioned in my report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222), Africa's economy continues to show resilience amid global economic and financial uncertainty. In 2012, Africa's economic growth reached 5 per cent. This positive result was driven by continued improvements in macroeconomic policy management, structural reforms, production and the export of commodities, including the rebounding of oil production in Libya, which had come to a halt during the revolution, as well as domestic consumption.

18. Foreign direct and portfolio investment in Africa increased by 5 per cent to $50 billion in 2012, despite an 18 per cent decline in global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. FDI flows to Africa were driven largely by investment in the extractive sectors (oil and minerals). Jobs generated by FDI over the period grew by 16.5 per cent, to 162,173. Total external financial flows to Africa reached a high of an estimated $186.3 billion in 2012, up from $158.3 billion in 2011, according to the 2013 African Economic Outlook.[2] The future outlook of FDI to Africa shows a more promising trend than in previous years, with the gradual strengthening of the global economic recovery, including a return to positive growth in the euro zone area.

19. According to the 2013 report of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), overall total official development assistance (ODA) declined from $133.7 billion in 2011 to $125.9 billion in 2012. In line with global trends, flows to Africa declined, albeit

[1] Further details about the African Peer Review Mechanism are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222).

[2] Further details about foreign direct investment trends are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222).

moderately, to $47.3 billion in 2012 from $51.7 billion in 2011. The decline in aid may be attributable in part to fiscal tightening in many donor countries, especially in Europe, because of the lingering effects of the global financial crisis and the turmoil in the euro zone economies.[3]

20. Going forward, it is crucial that the African private sector be strengthened with the necessary skills, capacities and financial support to meet market requirements and product standards, while developing viable businesses. This will allow the private sector to add value through labour-intensive industrialization, beneficiation and diversification, thereby contributing to poverty reduction through job creation. Other areas requiring support include the empowerment of women and young people, the development of infrastructure, environmental sustainability and the development of sustainable projects and effective public-private partnerships to address the challenge of youth unemployment.

III. Enhanced focus on the intertwined linkages between peace and development

21. In resolution 66/287, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit recommendations to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session on possible ways to strengthen the interdepartmental task force on African affairs in order to ensure further coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa, including in following up the implementation of all global summit and conference outcomes related to Africa.

22. Following extensive consultations with members of the task force coordinated by my Special Adviser on Africa in his capacity as the convenor, an addendum to my report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa was issued (A/67/205/Add.1-S/2012/715/Add.1). The addendum recommends the strengthening of the task force by institutionalizing it and also recommends joint advocacy for international support to Africa and African initiatives in partnership with relevant actors, including the United Nations, civil society, the private sector, media, academia and parliamentarians. It also specifically recommends championing approaches and solutions that take into account the nexus between peace, security and development in Africa.

IV. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the review report

A. Institutional cooperation

23. Cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities continues to evolve and to be strengthened in the light of the increasingly shared values, comparative advantages and commitments made

[3] Further details on official development assistance trends are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222).

by those organizations to advancing peace, security and economic development on the continent.[4]

24. In line with the priorities of the African Union's strategic plans, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, under the framework of the Peace and Security Cluster of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union, has been helping the African Union and ECOWAS to plan for and deploy peace support operations to Mali, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2085 (2012) and 2100 (2013).

25. In October 2012, within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) supported the launch of "Exercise Njiwa", an African Union training exercise for police and civilian personnel of the African Standby Force. The exercise was aimed at building the police and civilian capacities of the Force as part of the efforts to attain full operational capability by 2015. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNOAU will also support planning for the Amani Africa II exercise in 2014.

26. In addition, UNOAU continued its mandated task of providing technical management and expert advice to the African Union in the planning and deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate was renewed by Security Council resolution 2093 (2013).

B. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management

27. The United Nations continued to work with the African Union and ECOWAS in support of the political process in Mali and to address the situation in the Sahel. The United Nations supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Somalia and ECCAS on the situation in the Central African Republic. The United Nations has been working closely with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC to address the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

28. The United Nations is supporting the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in its efforts to help the Sudan and South Sudan resolve outstanding issues, including the final status of Abyei, and settle the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states through direct negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/North). In support of the political process, in May 2013 the Security Council, by its resolution 2104 (2013), extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and increased its troop strength from 4,200 to 5,326, in an effort to provide critical operational support for security arrangements between the Sudan and South Sudan.

29. In the Darfur region of the Sudan, the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur continues to provide support to the local authorities in order to resolve communal conflicts and seeks to address the root causes of conflict, including through mediation and local dialogue, as well as addressing disputes over land and water.

[4] Further detail regarding United Nations system support for the African Union, in particular the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), can be found in the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for NEPAD (E/AC.51/2013/6).

30. The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire remains an area of concern, in particular given the presence in Liberia of some 60,000 Ivorian refugees, as well as an uncertain number of Ivorian fighters and Liberian mercenaries who participated in the Ivorian conflict. The United Nations is helping both Governments to strengthen their cooperation and joint activities aimed at addressing those border challenges.

31. In Guinea-Bissau, the key drivers of instability continue to be the absence of civilian control and oversight over the military, organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as deep-seated impunity. The United Nations Integrated Peace building Office in Guinea-Bissau has initiated a five-year United Nations strategy to help the national authorities strengthen state capacity to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.

32. In Libya, the post-conflict democratic transition continues to be affected by various challenges, including regional tensions, and the marginalization of certain groups, especially civil society. In addition, limited economic opportunities and an inefficient public sector continue to hinder efforts to absorb and integrate revolutionaries into the army and progress towards reforming and rebuilding the security sector.

33. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is supporting the country in its political transition, in particular the ongoing constitution-making process, and is providing technical support and assistance to the General National Congress on procedural and capacity-related issues, including support for initiatives aimed at allowing for a participatory and effective consultation mechanism. UNSMIL has also led efforts to support women members of Congress and raise awareness of women's political rights.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

34. A fundamental challenge of post-conflict recovery is the creation of sustainable employment and other programmes for the reintegration of such vulnerable groups as ex-combatants, women and young people. In order to achieve this, the restoration of markets and economic infrastructure is critical, as is private sector development. Vocational education and training provide the necessary skills for the economic reintegration of those groups. Also important is the provision of decent work in both rural and urban communities.

35. In Côte d'Ivoire, a project on youth training for post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding and entrepreneurship development, implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), has helped improve the livelihoods of young people, including demobilized combatants, by renovating vocational training centres located in former conflict zones. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNIDO is implementing a project entitled "Developing the agroprocessing sector for livelihood recovery, job diversification and peacebuilding", focusing on women and young people, internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees, former combatants and poor farmers.

36. In Guinea-Bissau, the Peacebuilding Fund, together with the United Nations Children's Fund and UNIDO, implemented a project that reintegrates former youth militia and potential recruits living in the country's poor cities. The project takes a preventive approach by targeting the young and unemployed and engaging them in

activities in the recycling sector and by strengthening their leadership skills. In the Sudan, through a project entitled "Skills for peace and income", UNIDO is contributing to peacebuilding by providing training courses in welding, tiling, house painting and the repair of electrical appliances. The overall objective is to contribute to poverty alleviation in post-conflict situations through the creation of employment and income-generation opportunities.

37. The Peacebuilding Fund is actively engaged in helping the recovery process in Somalia through the implementation of a $10 million peacebuilding programme. Helping to re-establish vital infrastructure is key to the stabilization of the country. The Fund has supported 28 projects, allowing for the reopening of Government offices and police stations, in particular in the badly damaged western part of the country.

D. Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

38. Political instability and conflict exact a heavy cost in terms of lives lost and damage to social and community networks. Conflict also destroys safety nets, infrastructure and economic activity. It drains human capital and investment resources for infrastructure projects, dramatically reducing the potential for economic growth.

39. UNIDO is assisting African countries in lowering the barriers impeding the development of private initiatives in order to contribute to the development of a thriving private sector and fuel economic development and thereby lift people out of poverty. In Liberia, UNIDO supports economic empowerment by means of a project entitled "Raising incomes in rural communities through supporting artisanal fishery value chain and marketing development", which has promoted the transformation of subsistence artisanal fishing practices into commercial, market-oriented small businesses, providing food security and a much needed source of protein to rural communities.

40. By its resolution 66/214, the General Assembly decided to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference in 2014 on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on the special needs of landlocked developing countries. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, together with the Economic Commission for Africa, organized a regional review meeting for Africa in Addis Ababa in July 2013. The meeting addressed progress made and challenges to and effective regional policies in support of African landlocked developing countries. The recommendations and outcomes will feed into the programme of action for the next decade.

41. The Office of the High Representative and the Economic Commission for Africa also convened the African regional review of progress in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2013. The recommendations are intended to scale up progress in implementing the Programme of Action and enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the graduation criteria by 2020.

42. The Office of the High Representative is also organizing the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to take place in 2014. The goal of

the conference is to align the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation with the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. The preparatory process is currently under way, focusing on partnerships and the priorities set out in General Assembly resolution 67/207.

43. One of the most pressing issues facing Africa is the gradual degradation of arable land and encroaching desertification, which is affecting food security and the livelihoods of many communities. For the poor, who rely heavily on pastoralism and agriculture for their livelihoods, productive land and fertile soil is the most significant natural capital asset. Currently, 485 million people in Africa are affected by land degradation and desertification. The World Bank estimates that the effects of land degradation and desertification costs Africa $19.3 billion annually.

44. Land degradation and desertification can lead to prolonged episodes of famine in countries that are already impoverished and cannot sustain large agricultural losses. It can also lead to competition over productive land and water and trigger social and political instability and conflict.

45. As world leaders recognized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, these are challenges of global magnitude that affect sustainable development, in particular for the most vulnerable countries in Africa, and therefore require urgent action. Improved risk governance systems are a critical need for many African countries and other institutions.

46. The United Nations University, through the Integrated Risk Governance Project initiative, is helping countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, to develop policies designed to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and communities to the impact of extreme events through the establishment and deployment of response capabilities and institutional arrangements capable of protecting and assisting populations.

E. Human rights and humanitarian affairs

47. Protecting civilians remains a central pillar of the work of the United Nations in conflict and post-conflict settings. In Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire has been training sections of the Ivorian military in the protection of civilians and the police and gendarmerie on human rights, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO has trained the Congolese national police to provide security at camps for internally displaced persons. In Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has trained personnel of the armed forces of Liberia on human rights issues, including the use of force.

48. HIV prevention in conflict settings is a key human rights concern. In partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have trained more than 120 change agents, 105 peer educators, 34 HIV counsellors and 130 military trainers and officers. HIV awareness campaigns sponsored by UNMISS have reached more than 30,000 individuals, and HIV voluntary counselling and testing has been provided to 3,000 uniformed personnel. In Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, peacekeeping missions, together with UNAIDS, have trained 239 non-governmental organizations and 4,978 ex-combatants, of whom 4,233 received voluntary counselling services.

49. Humanitarian crises continue to be a challenge in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Somalia, the Sudan, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. The delivery of assistance continues to be hampered by insecurity, poor infrastructure, bureaucratic delays and seasonal conditions.

50. In order to confront these challenges, African regional organizations and Member States are increasingly providing leadership in the development of local, national and regional preparedness and emergency response capacities. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the African Union and regional economic communities with a view to supporting their capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies and strengthening their regional disaster response capacities, including the design of information-sharing platforms, including web-based platforms, as a repository of humanitarian updates. The Office is providing guidance in developing disaster management policies, as well as a comprehensive and all-encompassing humanitarian policy framework. It is also providing advice on how to establish pooled fund mechanisms for preparedness and recovery activities ("resilience funds"), as requested by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and IGAD.

F. Rule of law and the administration of justice

51. The United Nations system continues to support the rule of law and the development of stronger justice and law enforcement institutions to ensure the provision of a secure environment, institution-building and national reconciliation. In September 2012, the General Assembly adopted a declaration on a comprehensive array of measures to be taken to entrench the rule of law at national and international levels (see resolution 67/1). Establishing effective rule of law is particularly important in post-conflict settings.

52. In 2012, collaboration between the national authorities, MONUSCO and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations led to the establishment of support cells for military prosecution. The cells have received 28 official requests from the military justice authorities for assistance in the prosecution and investigation of serious crimes, including war crimes. The cells have also supported the holding of mobile court sessions, during which 30 judgements have been rendered, including 13 related to sexual violence crimes.

53. Through the joint West Africa Coast Initiative, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been working with the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Department for Political Affairs and the International Criminal Police Organization to support the establishment of transnational crime units.

54. In February 2013, the justice and security hub in Bong County, Liberia, was launched with the support of UNMIL. The hub houses police, courts and immigration officials in a single centre with the goal of increasing citizens' access to justice and security.

55. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has developed a comprehensive interregional technical assistance package, which seeks to strengthen criminal justice systems in selected countries in North and West Africa in order to combat

drug trafficking, organized crime, terrorism and corruption. In response to the challenges currently facing the Sahel, the Office contributed to the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which was developed pursuant to Security Council resolution 2056 (2012). It also continued to support the implementation of the Judicial Regional Platform for the Sahel, which seeks to facilitate regional cooperation and mutual legal assistance between Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger in the area of counter-terrorism.

56. During the reporting period, piracy off the coast of Somalia declined dramatically following concerted efforts by regional actors, the international community and the Somali people themselves. However, during the same period, the number of reported attacks in the Gulf of Guinea significantly increased, and piracy has had a substantial negative economic impact on West African countries. Through its counter-piracy programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has continued to support the detention and prosecution of suspected pirates in Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles, in accordance with international standards.

G. Support for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

57. In January 2013, the African Union summit adopted the African Union policy framework on security sector reform. The framework fosters African ownership of security sector reform activities and lends an African character to security sector reform approaches in peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding contexts.

58. The Department for Peacekeeping Operations and UNOAU, with funding from the European Union, helped the African Union to develop the multi-year African Union-United Nations European Union Strategic Partnership on Security Sector Reform. The programme supported the implementation of the African Union framework through the development of policy tools and guidance, human resource capacity-building, joint assessments and advocacy and regional training.

59. In addition, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in partnership with UNOAU and the World Bank Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, supported the pilot phase of the African Union Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity Programme, the aim of which is to institutionalize African Union disarmament, demobilization and reintegration capacities and engage African Union member States with a view to supporting their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The African Union has received and is in the process of responding to six requests from member States to support their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

60. The African Union Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, has developed an African strategy on small arms and a five-year implementation plan. The two documents provide a coordinated and comprehensive road map for the continent's fight against the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons across porous borders, which often exacerbate subregional instability and conflict in Africa.

V. Persistent and emerging challenges facing Africa: election-triggered conflict

61. In its resolution 65/278, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop policy proposals on persistent and emerging challenges facing the continent. One of those persistent challenges is ensuring that democratic processes such as elections prove to be a source of stability. The present section addresses how good governance and the rule of law can ensure better outcomes for electoral processes in Africa. In particular, the section explores how democratic elections can be a source of durable peace and stability and create an environment conducive to development activities rather than serving as a trigger for conflict on the continent.

A. Gains in democratization, good governance and the emergence of elected Governments in Africa

1. Overview

62. Since the 1990s, multiparty democracy in Africa has become institutionalized. Today, nearly all countries in Africa view elections as the most appropriate way to choose their leaders and decision makers at the local, regional and national levels. Elections have also become tools for transition from conflict, often marking the point at which a country starts out on its path to stability.

63. Elections provide a legitimate way for individuals in a country to compete for leadership and political power. Where elections are based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality and their management is professional, impartial and transparent, citizens not only elect their leaders but also enforce accountability in political leadership through their "power of the vote".

64. While not synonymous with democracy, elections are an indispensable tool of democracy, and the regularity and frequency of elections in Africa speaks of a generally positive trend towards democratic consolidation on the continent. This trend has fostered greater stability in recent decades. Elections have served as a powerful catalyst for better governance, security, peace and the consolidation of democracy in such countries as Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia and South Sudan.

65. Conversely, elections have also acted as catalysts for or triggers of conflict. Contested elections led to social strife, discord and even outright violence in Kenya in 2007, Zimbabwe in 2008 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010. In Guinea-Bissau and Mali, where planned elections were disrupted by military coups d'états, there have been serious democratic reversals. Failed electoral processes result in Governments that lack legitimacy, officials and institutions that are unaccountable to citizens and weakened public confidence. The exclusion from decision-making of disenfranchised groups can lead to an increase in social tensions and violence, which disrupt economic activity and investment.

2. The role of good governance and the rule of law in enhancing electoral outcomes and ensuring peace and stability

66. The African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, adopted in 2002, states that regular elections are a crucial

element of the democratization process and an essential ingredient for good governance, the rule of law and the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, stability and development.

67. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, adopted in January 2007, called on African States to commit themselves to promoting best practices in the management of elections for the purposes of political stability and good governance and to a system of government that is representative. Article 8 of the African Charter reads: "State parties shall eliminate all forms of discrimination … as well as any other form of intolerance. State parties shall adopt legislative and administrative measures to guarantee the rights of women, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons and other marginalized and vulnerable social groups. State parties shall respect ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, which contributes to strengthening democracy and citizen participation."[5]

68. The African Charter rightly notes the strong linkages between elections and good governance, as well as the rule of law, peace and stability. There is a direct correlation between elections, governance, the rule of law and the potential for conflict. Good governance, effective rule of law and, in particular, the effective and fair administration and management of electoral processes are critical to ensuring legitimate political outcomes that are accepted by society, thus reducing the potential for social conflict.

69. Poor governance, whether in the administration of the electoral process itself or in the management of social, economic and political issues after elections, can create conflict by engendering a lack of confidence in the political system, resulting in increased tensions and violence. Effective management of electoral processes and good governance are essential to ensuring stability and averting social conflict once power is obtained through the ballot box.

70. The triggers of conflict in Africa are many and varied. However, the exclusion and marginalization of groups from governance and political processes is one of the most common symptoms of poor governance and the most common trigger of conflict and relapse into conflict on the continent. An inclusive process for choosing leaders and ensuring participation in decision-making is essential in order to build confidence in the democratic process and develop a culture of solving problems through peaceful political alternation rather than violence.

71. A major challenge facing many African countries is the fact that the judiciary, law enforcement institutions and electoral dispute settlement mechanisms are weak. Sometimes, dispute resolution mechanisms are created only on an ad hoc basis when problems arise, and fail to have the desired impact. In some countries, people see the judiciary and law enforcement agencies as being loyal to the incumbent and hostile to any attempt to change the status quo.

72. Over the past decade, the African Peer Review Mechanism has established itself as a unique and innovative framework for promoting peace, security and development under the principles of transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. The Mechanism process has contributed to the opening up of political space for dialogue and improved service delivery, fostered national dialogue, and increased

[5] http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/Charter%20on%20Democracy.pdf.

advocacy for good governance.[6] In some countries, its findings have warned of impending crises and, when crises have erupted, those findings have provided a useful framework for reform.

B. Lessons learned: entrenching democracy, participation, and inclusion to achieve a durable peace and sustainable development

1. The importance of functioning rule of law institutions and effective governance in ensuring peaceful electoral outcomes

73. There are a number of key factors that help determine whether electoral processes contribute to greater stability and the creation of stronger, more vibrant democracies. These include the choice of the electoral system and how it is managed, the administration of electoral justice, the independence, professionalism and competence of electoral management bodies, and the existence of structural barriers to the universal and equal political participation of women, young people and minority groups. Laws against hate media, rules governing how parties conduct themselves and the powers given to election management bodies can help curb excesses and, over time, create a culture of tolerance, accountability and responsible leadership.

74. In this context, the responsibility for a peaceful and credible election rests with a country's political leaders, the candidates and their supporters, and the security forces. It is the contestants who, through their words and actions, can best ensure that no conflict ensues. At the same time, an effective and credible process can reduce the chance that an election will ignite political tensions.

75. A competent and impartial electoral management body is a basic condition for a credible electoral outcome. In many African countries, electoral management bodies often operate with limited human and financial resources. They may also suffer from the perception of a lack of impartiality and/or transparency. Loss of public confidence can create tensions and potential misunderstandings. Public confidence is often affected by unresolved issues relating to previous elections. Logistical flaws and inaccurate databases and voter lists, the failure to secure and tighten operational procedures, such as the tallying and announcement of results, poor communication between election commissions and political parties, or between the electoral management bodies and voters, also undermine the credibility of electoral processes.

76. Lengthy or inexplicable delays in the announcement of election results, the absence or perceived absence of transparency in the tabulation of election results, lack of transparency in the procurement of election-related resources, including supplies and personnel, and the lack of an effective and impartial judiciary or other system to deal with complaints can also result in a loss of voter confidence. The existence of judicial systems and adjudication mechanisms that can quickly address election-related complaints, as well as impartial and effective law enforcement agencies that can address political violence and intimidation, is critical. This is because aggrieved parties can easily perceive a delay in resolution as an attempt to "steal" an election, leading to protests, violence or conflict.

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[6] Further details on the African Peer Review Mechanism are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222).

77. Even more important, governance and rule-of-law institutions must be strong enough to respond quickly and effectively in instances when the electoral process has been fair but parties are seeking to block a legitimately elected Government from functioning. Increasingly, the African Union and subregional organizations, including ECOWAS and SADC, have refused to accept attempts to reject or overthrow legitimately elected Governments. This is an important step in the promotion of democracy and should be supported by the international community.

78. Addressing these multifaceted issues requires decision makers to work with legislatures, those responsible for law enforcement, political parties and civil society on legal frameworks that respond to the needs of each society in ways that help mitigate the potential for conflict. This includes adopting an electoral system and laws that foster inclusive outcomes, are simple enough to work in a society without high literacy rates and address the question of the inclusion of marginalized groups, including young people, women and the disabled.

2. Fostering citizen participation, inclusivity, transparency and fundamental freedoms

79. Violence, and in particular recurrent electoral violence, occurs most often in "winner take all" situations, especially when certain excluded groups can expect to lose not just once, but repeatedly, owing to ethnic or majority group block voting. This is further exacerbated when the winners exclude marginalized groups from decision-making, block their access to public services or prevent them from exerting any control over the allocation of public resources.

80. Ultimately, the extent to which people regard the electoral system as fair and inclusive determines its legitimacy and credibility and how much it will contribute to a country's stability rather than its fragility. If the electoral system is not perceived as fair and inclusive, those excluded from its management may feel that they have no recourse except violence, especially when they are perennial losers.

81. Ideally, an electoral system should favour the emergence of elected bodies with an inclusive composition and compromise candidates who pursue dialogue and reconciliation, rather than seeking confrontation or espousing extremist views. At the very least, an electoral system should not deepen divisions and perpetuate exclusion. Its design should be determined through a consultative, inclusive and transparent process. For countries emerging from conflict, the need to design the electoral system in a deliberative and consultative manner is even greater and is one way to address existing sources of conflict and build a sustainable peace.

82. Transparency and openness in the making of decisions and in the management of the electoral process has become particularly important in an era when news spreads quickly and widely. Electoral processes take place under increasing public scrutiny. Citizens have a greater ability to share their concerns, fears and information with thousands of others, affecting perceptions almost instantaneously.

83. New information and communications technologies are transforming the way that information is shared across the continent. Africans, in particular young people, are increasingly using the Internet and such social media as Twitter and Facebook not only as a means of communication, but also as sources of news and as platforms to mobilize the public in support of issues of common interest and encourage participation in civic activities such as combating electoral violence. In Kenya,

innovative software has helped to map and monitor political violence in elections. In Ghana, a movement monitoring the country's elections by means of social media called "@GhanaDecides" was credited with fostering a better informed electorate during the lead-up to the 2012 general election. It advocated free, fair and safe elections, ran online election-related campaigns and provided offline social media training for youth groups, civil society organizations and public institutions.

84. The relationship between technology and the level of confidence in an electoral process is a complex one, however. More is not necessarily better, and outcomes depend on what the technology is used for. Easy access to information and the ability of many people to participate at the same time is both a positive development and a challenge. It means that it is harder to hide flawed processes and disenfranchise people, and much easier for communities to organize around issues. This can be a gain and help to consolidate democracy. However, it can trigger violence if discontent spreads quickly, accentuating divisions within society.

C. United Nations support for electoral processes with the goal of consolidating peace and stability

85. The United Nations system provides various forms of electoral assistance, based on either a Security Council or General Assembly mandate or a request from a Member State or territory, following a needs assessment by the United Nations system-wide focal point for electoral assistance. In West Africa, for example, collaboration with State authorities in the organization of peaceful, free and fair elections has been at the core of the United Nations work to improve electoral processes and consolidate peace and stability. The United Nations Office for West Africa has engaged in extensive regional preventive diplomacy to support ECOWAS, State authorities and other actors in implementing the recommendations of the regional conference on elections and stability co-organized by the Office and ECOWAS in Praia, and to support peaceful and credible elections in Benin, Ghana and Senegal.

86. In November 2012, Sierra Leone successfully conducted presidential, parliamentary and local elections for the third time, achieving a key milestone in the country's peacebuilding efforts. In support of the elections, the Peacebuilding Fund, with Peacebuilding Commission guidance and advice, provided $5 million to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Development Programme country office to support civic, electoral education initiatives and conflict prevention and management activities. The project supported political parties, religious and traditional leaders, academia, civil society, women, young people and the media in engaging in the election process and helped to set up district-level mechanisms for early warning and the management of political violence. The project has contributed to deepening democracy in Sierra Leone by strengthening the capacity and professionalization of the Political Parties Registration Commission and of political parties. It has also helped to improve the organization of women's and youth associations, the councils of paramount chiefs and religious leaders and civil society networks.

87. At the request of the Libyan authorities, the United Nations electoral support team, comprising UNSMIL, UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services, provided substantive advice, technical assistance and operational support

to the High National Election Commission of Libya throughout the electoral process. Those efforts contributed to the laying of a foundation of sound knowledge and experience in democratic electoral processes, which will continue to serve Libya throughout its transition period and beyond. Indeed, the General National Congress elections in July 2012 marked a significant milestone in the democratic transition of Libya and passed off relatively well, despite the compressed electoral timetable, the volatile security situation, political violence and the country's lack of previous electoral experience.

88. Too often, electoral processes in countries emerging from political transitions, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Togo, have been marked by violent confrontations between incumbent and competing groups. In Guinea, the absence of consensus on electoral procedures has overshadowed peacebuilding gains achieved in that country and threatens the country's stability. The electoral crisis in Guinea underscores the need for effective preventive diplomacy and stronger engagement on the part of the United Nations at an early stage, including support for the consolidation of rule of law institutions and increased respect for human rights, to increase the capacity of institutions in charge of managing elections and electoral disputes.

89. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa published and distributed 7,000 copies of the revised edition of its "Guide for the maintenance of order during elections by security sector officials", which incorporates the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. Two training sessions for the police and gendarmerie based on the guide were conducted in Togo by the Centre, with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in preparation for the 2013 legislative elections.

VI. Recommendations

90. The African Union and regional economic communities are increasingly undertaking complex conflict prevention and mediation initiatives. The African Union is currently finalizing a continental conflict prevention framework and developing support structures for mediation and conflict resolution, including through high-level mediation panels led by former and sitting Heads of State. The United Nations system, Member States and other partners should therefore continue to strengthen their support and cooperation with the African Union and regional economic communities for conflict prevention, resolution and mediation within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union.

91. Lessons learned from conflict and post-conflict countries demonstrate that there can be no peace without development and that neither can occur without respect for human rights. The United Nations system should continue to strengthen the coordination and coherence of its engagement in Africa in order to address the peace, security, development and human rights challenges arising from situations of conflict on the continent in a comprehensive and holistic manner. In particular, the United Nations system should work to strengthen the efficacy of the regional coordination mechanism in its role of enhancing coordination between the United Nations, the African Union and

regional economic communities in addressing cross-cutting issues in the areas of peace and development.

92. The establishment in 2010 of UNOAU has strengthened the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and provided coordinated and consistent United Nations system support on a range of peace and security issues. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Office for Central Africa have similarly enhanced cooperation with regional bodies such as ECOWAS and ECCAS. In order to further support capacity-building for regional conflict-prevention, integration and peacemaking efforts, I encourage Member States to consider supporting the establishment of United Nations political presences in other African regions.

93. The consolidation of democracy and the entrenchment of the rule of law and good governance are critical to Africa's economic and political stability. The United Nations system, Member States and other partners should continue help African States, upon their request, to reinforce the capacity of national institutions to organize credible and transparent elections, bearing in mind that United Nations electoral support should be part of a broader approach to promoting peace and stability. United Nations assistance should be based on assessments made by the system-wide focal point on elections.

94. The international community should continue to support African countries, the African Union and the regional economic communities in their ongoing efforts to promote democracy, constitutional order and the rule of law, including through the African Peer Review Mechanism.

95. The United Nations should continue to support the efforts of African Governments to increase the participation of women and youth in political and economic decision-making processes, given the important role of both groups in ensuring peace and inclusive and sustainable economic development.

96. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including across borders, is a major factor that exacerbates conflict in Africa. African States should continue to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the other existing subregional instruments. The international community should increase capacity-building programmes, including technical training assistance, to African States in order to improve their ability to ensure the safety and security of weapons stockpiles.